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The evangelical Christians who own Oklahoma City-based Hobby Lobby filed a federal lawsuit on Wednesday challenging the federal mandate that employers provide “morning-after” pills to employees without charging a co-pay.

The lawsuit claims the federal Health and Human Services mandate, part of the so-called Affordable Care Act adopted in 2010, violates the business owners' freedoms of religion and speech.

The Green family, which owns Hobby Lobby and Mardel stores, have long been public about their religious beliefs, reflected in the closing of their stores on Sunday, the use of full-time chaplains to minister to employees and using profits to fund ministries.

The lawsuit states that the family's “commitment to Jesus Christ and to Biblical principles is what gives their business endeavors meaning and purpose.”

The lawsuit seeks a permanent injunction prohibiting the enforcement of the mandate against the Green family and its businesses, “and other individuals and organizations that object on religious grounds to providing insurance coverage for abortion-causing drugs and devices, and related education and counseling.”

“The Green family's religious beliefs forbid them from participating in, providing access to, paying for, training others to engage in, or otherwise supporting abortion-causing drugs and devices,” the lawsuit said. “The administrative rule at issue in this case runs roughshod over the Green family's religious beliefs, and the beliefs of millions of other Americans, by forcing them to provide health insurance coverage for abortion-inducing drugs and devices, as well as related education and counseling.”

The lawsuit was filed by the Becket Fund, which has filed similar actions on behalf of religious

schools and at least one business. A news release issued by the law firm said Hobby Lobby is the largest, and first non-Catholic owned business to challenge the mandate.

Hobby Lobby operates employs more than 13,000 people in more than 500 stores in more than 40 states. Mardel operates 35 stores in seven states and has 372 full-time employees.

The suit was filed in federal court in Oklahoma City.

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